

Equality and social inclusion

Prerequisites for a stable democracy

As part of Albania's convergence with EU standards, special attention is paid to the protection of human rights. Austria's focus has been on gender equality, women's empowerment and social inclusion, resulting in the following:

- Over 1,000 civil servants have become gender sensitive.
- 31 professional gender trainers have been qualified.
- Gender-responsive budgeting has been institutionalised at central level and in 5 municipalities.
- Child protection units to be established in all local government units
- 70 trained school psychologists have taken care of up to 4,830 children in need of protection.
- 664 schoolmasters and 20 regional coordinators have been trained.
- 1,609 children in need and 508 families have received various types of assistance.
- Roma have been helped to register for social assistance.



Strengthening institutions

Strengthening public administration at central, regional and local level is an essential requirement for a country to join the EU.

All programmes funded and implemented by ADC include capacity development measures, such as:

- Increasing skills and capacities of public administration staff
- Recommending organisational adjustments
- Introducing modern technologies and new working techniques
- Sharing EU models of best practice
- Introducing transparency and accountability mechanisms
- Establishing links with networks of EU experts and potential partner institutions

In addition, ADC has contributed to Albania's EU accession by supporting public finance management, IPA programming, an integrated planning system and regional development.



Instruments of cooperation

The **Austrian Development Agency (ADA)**, the operational unit of ADC, finances:

- Regional projects in education, economic development and governance,
- Business partnerships between Albanian and Austrian or European enterprises in cooperation with **Oesterreichische Entwicklungsbank (OeEB)** and
- NGO cooperation.

The **Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs** funds multilateral organisations, such as the UN, OSCE and EU initiatives in Albania and/or regionally.

The **Federal Ministry of Finance** supports Albania through IFIs (World Bank, EBRD, EIB) and soft loans. OeEB provides tailor-made financing arrangements for diverse long-term investments.

The **Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Environment Agency Austria** and the **Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection** provide expertise through EU and bilateral funded projects with a focus on EU legal approximation and law enforcement.

As well as providing support to the IT Vocational Education School in Shkodra, the **Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts, and Culture** promotes educational exchanges and know-how transfer.

Sound partnerships

ADC would like to thank the following institutions for their fruitful cooperation:

■ **Government counterparts:** The Prime Minister's Office (Department for Strategy & Donor Coordination), Ministry of Transport and Public Works, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Education and Sciences, Ministry of European Integration and Ministry of Finance along with associated government institutions, such as the Training Institute of Public Administration, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, prefectures, regions and over 50 municipalities

■ **Non-governmental counterparts:** Albanian Parliament, civil-society organisations, human rights activists, the Media Institute, research institutes in Tirana and Shkodra and Polis University

■ **Development partners:** All multilateral donors for successfully implementing Austrian funded projects, the Swiss and German Governments for joint programming, the Delegation of the European Union, the sectoral donor focal points/EU lead donors for facilitating donor policy dialogue and cooperation

■ **Private sector:** Enterprises that have been successfully engaged in ADA/OeEB-funded business partnerships



Twenty years of Austrian Development Cooperation in Albania

New Ways of Partnership

Austrian
Development Cooperation

Development cooperation

Building on strong historical ties, Austria has continued to support Albania's sustainable development and EU integration efforts in areas such as good governance, regional development, social inclusion and protection, gender equality, environment and renewable energy, vocational education, water and sanitation.

The programme of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) focuses on:

- Technical assistance to Albanian institutions by strengthening capacities
- Supporting the development and implementation of national strategies, policies and legal frameworks
- Introducing European standards and modern technologies
- Investments in infrastructure
- Support for civil-society organisations



Safe water for everyone

Based on the EU Water Framework Directive, the human right to water and sanitation, Millennium Development Goals, and national policies and strategies, ADC activities have focused on the rehabilitation and expansion of water infrastructure in North Albania, strengthening the capacities of water utilities and local government units and improving water governance through consumer involvement. ADC has also acted as the EU lead donor for enhancing donor coordination in this sector.

Achievements:

- Around 100,000 residents have 24/7 access to safe drinking water in Shkodra.
- Residents of Bushat, Barbullush, Ana e Malit, Rranxa, Laç, Kastrat and Koplík now also have access to safe water, some through pipelines for the very first time.
- Complementary wastewater management measures have been conducted.



Environmental protection & renewable energies

Austria has a long standing cooperation with Albania in the energy sector that dates back to the early 1990s with support for the rehabilitation of the Drin River Cascade. ADC has undertaken additional environmental activities to help Albania comply with EU standards in this sector.

ADC supported the following:

- Capacity development and drafting legislation for the nationwide Clean Development Mechanism
- Training in and technical improvement of solar thermal energy systems
- Rehabilitation of the Vau i Dejës, Ulza and Shkopet hydropower plants
- Identification of 14 and rehabilitation of 2 environmental hot spots
- Supporting solid waste management schemes
- Promoting environmental education in schools



Vocational education

Building professional skills for economic growth

ADC has supported the establishment of a modern and professional vocational education and training (VET) system that meets the requirements of the Albanian labour market and the needs of the private sector.

Activities included developing teaching skills and curricula, improving school management, linking VET schools with the private sector and promoting internships, contributing to policy reforms and legal amendments, improving access of marginalised groups to vocational training and networking with regional, international and Austrian experts.

Achievements:

- 460 training activities in 20 VET schools
- Establishment of the first 3 tourism schools
- Setting up a network of 29 virtual training firms along with a national training firm centre



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